

KUWAIT



Kuwait U.S. foreign assistance to Kuwait supports diplomatic efforts and a strategic political-military arrangement designed to counter threats likely to emerge in the volatile Persian Gulf region by funding training opportunities for key Kuwaiti military leaders

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Following independence in June 1961, Kuwait faced its first major foreign policy problem arising from Iraqi claims to Kuwait's territory. The Iraqis threatened invasion but were dissuaded by the U.K.'s ready response to the Amir's request for assistance. Kuwait presented its case before the United Nations and preserved its sovereignty. U.K. forces were later withdrawn and replaced by troops from Arab League nations, which were withdrawn in 1963 at Kuwait's request.

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. Through U.S. efforts, a multinational coalition was assembled, and, under UN auspices, initiated military action against Iraq to liberate Kuwait. Arab states, especially the other five members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates), Egypt, and Syria, supported Kuwait by sending troops to fight with the coalition. Many European and East Asian states sent troops, equipment, and/or financial support.

After liberation, Kuwait concentrated its foreign policy efforts on development of ties to states which had participated in the multinational coalition. Notably, these states were given the lead role in Kuwait's reconstruction. Kuwait's relations with those nations that supported Iraq, among them Jordan, Sudan, Yemen, and Cuba, were slow to recover. Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasir Arafat's support for Saddam Hussein during the war also affected Kuwait's attitudes toward the PLO though Kuwait supports the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The Government of Kuwait has abandoned its previous policy of limiting the entry of workers from nations whose leaders had supported Iraq during the Gulf War. In August 2001, the Interior Minister announced that there were no longer any special restrictions or permits required for Palestinian workers wishing to return to the country. At the end of 2002, there were approximately 30,000 to 40,000 Palestinians, 30,000 to 40,000 Jordanians, and 5,000 Yemenis resident in Kuwait.

Since liberation from Iraq, Kuwait has made efforts to secure allies throughout the world, particularly UN Security Council members. In addition to the United States, defense arrangements have been concluded with the United Kingdom, Russia, and France. Ties to other key Arab members of the Gulf War coalition--Egypt and Syria--also have been sustained.

During the 2002-03 buildup to and execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Kuwait was a vital coalition partner, reserving a full 60% of its total land mass for use by coalition forces and donating significant assistance in kind to the effort. Kuwait continues to provide generous assistance in kind to ongoing coalition operations in Iraq. Kuwait has been consistently involved in reconstruction efforts in Iraq, pledging \$1.5 billion at the October 2003 international donors' conference in Madrid, and consulting closely with Iraqi officials, including former Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaffari, who visited Kuwait in late October 2005, and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who visited in July 2006 and again in April 2007. Kuwait has been an active and vocal public supporter of the political process in Iraq, welcoming the January 2005 elections and praising Iraq's October 2005 successful constitutional referendum. In April 2008 Kuwait hosted the Iraq Neighbors' Conference, which was attended by Secretary of State

Condoleezza Rice, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, and foreign ministers from throughout the region. In October 2008, Lieutenant General (retired) Ali Al-Mou'min presented his credentials as Kuwait's Ambassador to Baghdad to Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

Kuwait is a member of the UN and some of its specialized and related agencies, including the World Bank (IBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); African Development Bank (AFDB), Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), Arab League, Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Group of 77 (G-77), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), INMARSAT, International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labor Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization, Interpol, IOC, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

U.S.-KUWAITI RELATIONS

The United States opened a consulate in Kuwait in October 1951, which was elevated to embassy status at the time of Kuwait's independence 10 years later. The United States supports Kuwait's sovereignty, security, and independence, as well as its multilateral diplomatic efforts to build greater cooperation among the GCC countries.

Strategic cooperation between the United States and Kuwait increased in 1987 with the implementation of a maritime protection regime that ensured the freedom of navigation through the Gulf for 11 Kuwaiti tankers that were reflagged with U.S. markings.

The U.S.-Kuwaiti strategic partnership intensified dramatically again after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The United States spearheaded UN Security Council demands that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait and its authorization of the use of force, if necessary, to remove Iraqi forces from the occupied country. The United States also played a dominant role in the development of the multinational military operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm that liberated Kuwait. The U.S.-Kuwaiti relationship has remained strong in the post-Gulf War period. Kuwait and the United States worked on a daily basis to monitor and to enforce Iraq's compliance with UN Security Council resolutions, and Kuwait has also provided the main platform for Operation Iraqi Freedom since 2003.

Since Kuwait's liberation, the United States has provided military and defense technical assistance to Kuwait from both foreign military sales (FMS) and commercial sources. The U.S. Office of Military Cooperation in Kuwait is attached to the American embassy and manages the FMS program. There are currently 107 open FMS contracts between the U.S. military and the Kuwait Ministry of Defense totaling \$8.4 billion. Principal U.S. military systems currently purchased by the Kuwait Defense Forces are Patriot Missile systems, F-18 Hornet fighters, the M1A2 main battle tank, AH-64D Apache helicopter, and a major recapitalization of Kuwait's Navy with U.S. boats.

Kuwaiti attitudes toward American products have been favorable since the Gulf War. In 1993, Kuwait publicly announced abandonment of the secondary and tertiary aspects of the Arab boycott of Israel (those aspects affecting U.S. firms). The United States is currently Kuwait's largest supplier of goods and services, and Kuwait is the fifth-largest market in the Middle East. U.S. exports to Kuwait totaled \$2.14 billion in 2006. Provided their prices are reasonable, U.S. firms have a competitive advantage in many areas requiring advanced technology, such as oil field equipment and services, electric power generation and distribution equipment, telecommunications gear, consumer goods, and military

equipment.

Kuwait also is an important partner in the ongoing U.S.-led campaign against international terrorism, providing assistance in the military, diplomatic, and intelligence arenas and also supporting efforts to block financing of terrorist groups. In January 2005, Kuwait Security Services forces engaged in gun battles with local extremists, resulting in fatalities on both sides in the first such incident in Kuwait's history.

In January 2008, three Kuwait citizens were designated by the UN 1267 Committee as terrorist facilitators and in May 2008, in compliance with UN 1267 obligations, the Government of Kuwait froze the assets of the three Kuwaitis.

Peace and Security: This foreign assistance funding request supports English language and other U.S. military training for Kuwaiti military officials and builds a foundation for major increases in future U.S. training for the Kuwait Ministry of Defense. It will permit the Kuwaiti Government to maximize the number of officers it sends to training, providing Kuwaiti officers with a sophisticated level of military expertise to facilitate increased interoperability with U.S. forces. Furthermore, these funds will permit the Government of Kuwait to purchase military training in the United States at a cost that is considerably lower than what is charged countries not eligible for military education and training funds.